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AN ADDRESS

LB 41

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ON THE

REMEDIES FOR CERTAIN DEFECTS,

IN

AMERICAN EDUCATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE

LYCEUMS OR INSTITUTES FOR EDUCATION

AT

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ADDRESS.

ON this occasion a few suggestions will be made with a view to aid in correcting some defects which exist among us in education. By education I mean the whole preparation for the duties and trials of life. Instruction in the broadest sense—physical and moral no less than intellectual, is intended to be embraced. Nor should it be confined to youth, but be viewed as extending both its sphere and influence from the cradle to the grave.

In order to cure defects it is desirable, in the outset, to understand thoroughly their origin and character. Ours are believed to spring chiefly from certain peculiarities in society and government in this country, some of which are very prominent. One of them is the more equal division of power and property among all. That generally produces a diffusion of common acquirements wider, or to a larger portion of the whole community. But, at the same time, it opens a door to greater imperfections in those acquirements, as well as in higher attainments.

Another of these peculiarities is the increased freedom from restraint, almost inseparable from institutions so popular in form as ours. It is being left more to self-government; and the natural consequences of it are a discipline less strict and stronger self-confidence, bordering even on rashness at times, in business as well as all kinds of public action. Without detaining you at this time by a specification of further peculiarities, and without denying, but rather rejoicing that some advantages accompany these, such as their tendency to elevate, in the social circle, as well as in politics, the great mass of society—to bend legislation throughout to the interests of all, rather than of particular classes or eminent individuals—to govern quite as much by public opinion as by magistrates, and to have experiments made in almost every thing, where improvement is possible; yet it must be obvious that defects also, like those, before alluded to as the usual consequences of our peculiarities, are apt to follow from their prevalence.

These defects, even if mortifying to self-love, it is more manly to confess and more American to cure, if practicable, than to attempt concealment and evasion, or persist wantonly in error. Honesty and boldness to probe and expose them are the first steps. Then their correction, though difficult from the intimate ties between them and our political institutions is, undoubtedly, to some extent feasible, and by all those who love and respect those institutions, will be attempted in some mode not dangerous to their structure, nor hostile to the true spirit which pervades them. In my opinion this can be done by devoting greater attention to the means as well as character of education. Hence it is the duty of all, and we are to-night assembled here (I hope not in vain,) to contribute something to the wide efforts now making around us for the accomplishment of so laudable an object. Much can be effected, by concentrating the energies of all to three prominent points. These are increased intelligence in the community at large, to elevate, expand, and purify; next a more thorough discipline, or, in other words, training to follow implicitly the dictates of that

intelligence; and after these, as difficulties arise too formidable for them to overcome, a more constant reliance on moral and christian principles for direction rather than on the blinder impulses of passion, prejudice, or appetite. Those more than any other instruments, can aid to form correct national habits of thinking and action. Without advancement in the use of those agents, and more especially the first one; it is hardly necessary, before such an audience, to occupy time in proving that the prospects of humanity are always and every where shrouded with shadows, clouds; and darkness. The body is but base matter, the mind but a blank, or devoted merely to the coarsest animal wants. Man remains a savage; society, a herd of beasts of prey; and civilization, much less any important progress in arts, science, virtue, or political greatness, becomes utterly hopeless.

It is, therefore, important to ascertain what are the most efficient methods of augmenting or advancing the power of some of the great agents before alluded to, and, at the same time, to illustrate as fully as the occasion may permit, the searching, wide, and all-pervading influence the whole of them are calculated to exert in the education and improvement of mankind.

In respect to the first one, our course seems to be plain. If it be asked, how we can promote, quickest and best, the information which should in early life be imparted to all, with a view to qualify them for the greatest future usefulness, or that information which is so indispensable in riper years, to enable us to decide judiciously in the thousand emergencies which arise under our systems of political self-government, and regulate better, in all pursuits, that ardent enterprise, which covers our whole country, not only with monuments of prosperous greatness, but, unfortunately, in too many places, with wrecks and ruin?

I answer—by the press—by the press in all its various forms. In the front rank—books. These should be better compiled and less expensive. After these, a bold, intelligent, honest newspaper press. When of such a character, it becomes truly “a happy work,” and more than “a map of busy life—its fluctuations and its vast concerns,” because it does much to shape and control those concerns in every position and under every vicissitude. It carries intelligence and argument, wit, wisdom and contemporary history of all kinds to every hearth-stone, however remote or humble. Mingled with this, are doubtless some licentiousness and malignity as well as folly; but the useful is believed greatly to preponderate.

Next, by a just and learned periodical press.

I answer further, by having the school-master more widely abroad, fitted not only to teach the “young idea how to shoot” but to train, expand, and mature it.

I answer further still, by free schools, every where. Open, in this manner, the “ample page” of knowledge, whenever and wherever an immortal soul exists, that can be warmed into action by hopes of greater wealth, honour, fame, or usefulness to mankind. In brief, beginning with the press, do not end with it, till all its forms are exhausted, all its instruments tried, all its avenues explored, and its whole powers of every kind improved.

In diffusing its productions wide, go to the cottage as soon as the palace. Seek out the real log-cabins of a wilderness frontier. Explore the dens of poverty and crime in the crowded city. Enter even the cells of the penitentiary. The mission is to all. Make it more effective too by bringing

knowledge more readily within the reach of all, through successful efforts to diminish its expense. Lessening the cost of printing is the most important step towards this result; and hence, we should specially encourage in it labour-saving machinery and steam power, with all their civilizing wonders to enlighten as well as enrich mankind.

Print, if possible, beyond even the thirty sheets by a steam press, now executed in the time one was formerly struck off. Go also beyond the present gain in their distribution over much of the world by improvements in the locomotive and the steamboat so as to accomplish like results at far less than the former cost. Promote the discovery of still further materials than rags, bark, or straw for the wonderful fabric of paper,—used, not merely as the ornament of our drawing rooms, the preserver of history—the organ of intercourse between both distant places and distant ages, the medium of business, the evidence of property, the record of legislation, and in all ranks, the faithful messenger of thought and affection; but above all the universal instrument of instruction. Reduce still further, by new inventions, the already low price of manufacturing paper. Render types also cheaper as well as more durable. And, in short, set no boundaries and prostrate all barriers whatever to the enterprise of the human mind in devising greater facilities for its own progress. Next to these considerations new means might well be adopted to improve the quality of those books which are in most common use. This could be accomplished by greater attention to their practical tendency and suitableness to the times in which we live, and the public wants which exist under our peculiar institutions, whether social or political. The highest intellects might beneficially descend at times to labour in writing for the humblest spheres of letters and life. In cases of long and obvious deficiencies in books, designed for particular branches of instruction, boards of education might well confer premiums for better compilations. Such boards might also, with advantage, strive to multiply institutions, particularly intended to prepare more efficient teachers, female as well as male. In short, the fountains must always be watched, in order to ensure pure streams; and the dew, which descends nightly on every object, and in all places however lowly, is more useful than a single shower confined to a limited range of country. We must take paternal care of the elements on which all at first feed; and if in these modes we seek with earnestness the improvement of the many, we help to protect the property and persons of the favoured few as much as we elevate the character and conduct of all situated in the more retired walks of society. There is another powerful motive for exertion, even by the higher classes, to advance the better education of the masses. It is this—the wealthy for instance can clearly foresee, that, by the revolutions of fortune's wheel, their own children, or grand children are in time likely to become indigent, so as to be the immediate recipients of favour under any system of free education, and thus may be assisted to attain once more rank and riches. Nor should the talented be parsimonious in like efforts, because a degeneracy of intellect, not unusual after high developments in a family, may plunge their posterity into ignorance and want, where some untaught Addison or "mute inglorious Milton" might, after a few generations, re-appear, but never instruct or delight the age, unless assisted at first by opportunities and means furnished through a system like this. All which is thus bestowed will likewise prove not only an inheritance for

some of the offspring of the favoured classes; but a more durable one than most of those honors and riches, endeavoured so often, but fruitlessly, to be transmitted. It is true, that vicissitudes seem impressed on almost every thing human—painful, heart-rending vicissitudes,—which the fortunate dread, and would mitigate, if not able to avert. But they belong less to systems than to families or individuals, and can be obviated best by permanent plans to spread stores of intellectual wealth, constantly and freely around all. Indeed, an expenditure of this kind must, in one view; make even selfishness liberal, as in no way could refined self-love form so enduring a hoard or treasure, to benefit its posterity and name, as by contributing to build up, enlarge, or, in any way, improve a system of education, which may found the fortunes and glory of some of that very posterity, when become impoverished; and for whose grandeur so many toils may have been otherwise lavished in vain. It is the safest investment of funds, because it can never fail to do good, even to our own, till all the laws of the social system fail; and because it rests not on the strength of seals, or the wealth of sureties; but on the great foundations of nature, civilization, philosophy, and the interests of millions in successive generations to sustain it. Another important consideration is, that under such an aspect of the subject, the high and the low will always feel less of either prejudice or envy towards each other. The former will, in the latter class see the persons or the parents of those who are destined ere long, by free and useful education, under our popular forms of government, to influence, adorn and govern society. On the contrary, the poor will in the wealthy and honoured see, not what is unattainable or unapproachable by them, as might be the case under different institutions and teachings, but the more desirable fortunes, which, in the true philosophy of our political system must, as deserved earnings or brilliant prizes, await ere long, the superior industry, intelligent, and cautious enterprize and well regulated morals either of themselves or the children they love.

Both must in this view more justly appreciate the importance to each other of the exertions now commended; and, more especially, must the humble in life look favourably on the possession of wealth and honours as a system, rather than consider them unjust or odious, as is the disheartening view which has so often prevailed under different institutions to the disturbance of the public peace and the destruction of all general improvement.

When, therefore, all are properly informed, the distinctions in society as to office and its balanced protection of property as well as person will appear as full of encouragement to the poor and lowly, in anticipation, as they are to the rich and high in fruition.

Another powerful instrument to promote this object, of increased information among all classes, is the wider extension of commerce. Commerce teaches often, by example, even more effectually than books do by precept. Whether foreign or domestic, it is, whenever easy, frequent and active, calculated to pour a flood of light into the human mind, on almost every subject; and to strike it with the more force, as it is light from practice—light from actual experiment—light from living and embodied excellence—No matter whether the defects in our education relate to politics, religion, literature, the sciences, or the arts—in all of them, precept, compared with example, is uncertainty and doubt, compared with reality. Example is theory verified, and therefore when seen by travel or commerce, as new

example often is, it becomes more convincing than the strongest argument. Hence the proverbial advantages arising from good companions and foreign travel.

These considerations, on a broader scale, apply to nations, as well as individuals; and each nation by free commerce within itself, makes the merits of every part better known to the rest and enables every part to profit by the excellencies of the whole. Following out the same analogies we can see that, through a liberal commercial intercourse—not only each nation, but every continent and the globe itself can derive from all portions some useful hints—some useful customs—some useful arts or useful laws. Frequently what otherwise would to foreigners be born “to waste its fragrance on the desert air,” thus becomes known and beneficial to all. Again commerce, free and unshackled, supplies wants, comforts, and luxuries, whether to the savage or civilized, and whether near at hand or at the antipodes; and, in this way, by rendering the surplus productions of all countries more valuable in exchange, it helps to excite, encourage and reward the very highest exertions of both body and mind. It thus aids to educate all in most important particulars. It rouses industry in the indolent; animates the torpid to enterprise; expands the views of the recluse; civilizes the roughest, and inspires rivalry in the most sluggish. It assists to propagate new opinions and a new faith, under both the equator and the poles; fertilizes every region not covered with eternal snows; and pushing human improvement in all its varied forms, penetrates remotest seas, and crosses the Andes, the Alps, and the Himalayan, almost as daringly as the Alleghenies. The moderns have hardly done justice to former ages in relation to their immense inland trade, enlightening and civilizing wherever it spread—whether up the Nile from Egypt, or into the remotest Ind from Tyre, and thence from Carthage to distant Britain, and in time over-reaching the Atlantides, discovering, under the more adventurous Genoese, a new continent, and gradually pervading the whole Western hemisphere.

The moderns have, to be sure, since entered the farthest isles of the Pacific, and are exploring the ice of both Poles; but it is probable they at last must sigh that there are no more worlds to find and civilize which are worth the search.

One illustration of the enterprize and educating character of commerce, when free, has recently come under my own eye, that may not be without interest to you, in connection with this topic.

During the last autumn in a small town in the interior of Massachusetts, I found American lead, which had been dug, partly by Yankee industry and adventure in the remote wilderness of Wisconsin or Missouri. The same industry and adventure had not only helped to dig, but had transported it through the active channels of commerce, a circuit of more than two thousand miles from the mighty West to the rocky East; and that on routes unknown but a few years ago to any thing but the fearless hunter, or the birchen canoe. Fed partly by meat from the same distant source, and corn from the South, and flour from the Middle States (fruits of the same commercial enterprise) they were zealously occupied in making this lead into water pipes for operations still more distant, and not a little extraordinary.

What, think you, was to be one of their principal markets? Some of

this lead was manufacturing by special order, to be freighted again, under the same Yankee perseverance, not merely two thousand miles, but nearly half the circumference of the globe. It was to double the stormy Cape Horn—twice cross the Equator, and find its pathless way over new seas into the remote Sandwich islands. And for what use?

To advance again, as a labour-saving machine, the commercial interests of the same spirit, which had untiringly explored the forests, whence the raw material was obtained. It was in the form of pipes, to conduct water more cheaply and conveniently on board our whale ships, which with others resort so frequently to those islands for their necessary supplies.

The mode of paying for it evinces with perhaps greater strength the instructive influence of commerce. It was to be paid for by taking in exchange, partly sugar, cotton, and oil, the products of new native labour and skill among a people not long before (scarce two-thirds of a century) barbarous in the extreme, and murdering the immortal navigator who first discovered and blessed them with some elements of civilization. But now, under the teaching and stimulants of commerce—transporting thither, as every where else over the whole habitable globe—the new sense of duty, inspired by the religion of the Cross, they are advanced somewhat in letters, agriculture and the arts, as well as engaging considerably in commerce itself.

Another influence of free commerce on the education of a people has been to confer increased value on all other kinds of labour, and thus develope more mental activity and vigour as well as carefulness, toil, and perseverance in their pursuit. Thus one nation may be more agricultural, or more manufacturing, but it is commerce either from abroad or at home, which alone can secure a high degree of prosperity to either of those great branches of industry. For by that they are principally stimulated and increased so as to furnish the chief materials for trade, as that alone gives to those materials, when beyond what the meagre necessities of life demand their principal value. It thus encourages their extensive production; thus animates the mind to new discoveries and useful inventions for their progress, and helps to improve all the arts and skill by which they attain any high degree of excellence. Destroy commerce, and most of what now polishes, adorns, or enriches, as well as enlightens the world, would degenerate into mere exertion for daily existence. Without its talismanic power, the plough would almost sleep in the furrough; the shuttle in the loom. The labour-saving machine would be inanimate and as useless as the mighty pillar of stone in its native quarry, before moulded under the powers of art into the splendid edifice—the colossal bridge—the lofty aqueduct or the heroic column. And even the wondrous machinery of steam would be dead wood and iron, uneducated by the stimulants of commerce to be almost instinct with life, and destined probably to revolutionize the world. There might, to be sure, without commerce be some separate pieces of the vast chain of civilization, but no connecting link, to impart strength and usefulness to the whole. Man would, of course, still exist, but he would rather vegetate than live. He would resemble the oyster more than that glorious being akin to angels and described by Shakespeare as “so noble in reason” and so “infinite in faculties.” The mind, in such a torpid, uneducated, unexcited, unrepaid condition, as exists without commerce, is like a house without inhabitants, or a stream studded with busy manufactories become abandoned, and thus ere long converted into desolate ruins

and stagnant pools. The intellect deteriorates, as the thronged city, when deserted and unvisited by the hum of commerce. Its streets, soon become covered with grass and even forests; its market places, choked up with rubbish—its warehouses, crumbled under cobwebs and moss into mouldering dust, and, in time, through mere abandonment, scarcely one stone left on another of its gorgeous mansions any more than if some Attila had passed over them the ploughshare of Vandal conquest.

How many men, in more advanced life, become in this way, by mere inaction, the ruined Thebes and Balbecs of what they once were? their minds by neglect alone a wilderness that has uprooted every thing beautiful or great. They seem full of mutilated statuary, fallen temples, overturned walls, like the mysterious sites of Copan or Uxmal in the central portions of our own continent.

Usefully there may perhaps be some cloistered seclusion for religious meditation or solitude for literary researches and philosophical experiment, when those are thus pursued, not in torpor, but animated by motives the most ardent, and encouraged by eager intentions of maturing what will prove good; and the results, ere long, to be ushered to an applauding world, the more perfect, as less interrupted by other avocations. But, as a general rule, shut up a hermit in his cell or a victim of state in some Bastille; and allow to neither, books, companions, or employment; and the process of education, thus suspended, and both of them virtually without intellectual commerce, they would not merely halt in improvement, but degenerate, and, ere long, lose even the power of speech itself; or talk, an unintelligible tongue. Indeed, without regard to peculiar exceptions, inactive seclusion in man, or a non-intercourse with his race, leads to death. It is its symbol and companion as well as cause. Fortunately it is an inexorable law of our nature, and one of its great teachers, that to fulfil his high destiny, man must be social, and at the same time active. "By ceaseless action all that is, exists." The commercial spirit does most towards this, because it is the most restless, vivifying, adventurous, and busy of any which agitates society. Commercial intercourse, also obliterates prejudices as well as furnishes new suggestions and excitements, new longings and desires. Collision stimulates. Experience hardens. They all prevent mould and moth, as well as rust. Besides this, commerce is both ever growing, and ever improving. We often see that the exercise of one faculty, one sense, or one limb increases its activity and power. So the public mind, as a whole in any country, when more awakened and exercised by a series of new objects or examples in commerce, augments in freshness and ardour no less than vigour and keenness, till the wider diffusion and higher perfection of knowledge among all are produced, and in turn produce a people distinguished in every quarter of the globe, and push forward a few to such exalted acquirements as to become statesmen, lawgivers and philosophers little below demi-gods in history and power. Men are thus educated to be liberal, likewise, as well as elevated. Novel and bold opinions in politics or religion soon cease to be contraband articles in the enlarged intercourse between nations. Restrictions on efforts by others or on fair competition of any kind are gradually prostrated.

Prohibitory laws as to trade—colonial vassalage in business, severe penalties against free enterprise and free industry—onerous taxes or burthens on either exports or imports—harshness to foreigners—Chinese exclusion—Japanese in-

tolerance—barbarous prejudices against strangers—all are in time softened down, and must be dispelled by the magic wand of commerce. If luxury or voluptuous manners are sometimes promoted by it, which is not improbable, it is only the occasional evil, often inseparable from the permanent good; and injures it little more than the spots on the face of the sun obscure its light to us, or lessen its refulgent glories to the whole solar system.

How greatly the influence of commerce in this and many other respects is to be extended by the use of steam, is an enigma, which time only can solve.

In the "art of all arts" that of printing, its improvements bearing so closely on education, may quite equal in time the wonderful influence of the great discovery of printing itself—a discovery which, thus aided, is destined more than any other to become a safeguard to prevent the world again, in any region, from rebarbarizing. It will probably save from a second destruction much of history, many arts—chemistry, and perhaps steam itself, which may once, have been understood, and disappeared with those learned and priestly orders, with whom knowledge of all kinds formerly existed in the greatest perfection. Some of the sciences, even with them, were mysteries, and may never be developed again, but by new inventions or difficult solutions of what is concealed under hieroglyphics, painting and sculpture. But if general education, on all practical subjects had, in antiquity, been aided by the multiplying and preserving power of the press, strengthened as it now is by commerce and steam, though it still might have been possible for ambition to have desolated a Palmyra or Palenque, and transferred the seat of empire from Carthage to Rome, or Tyre to Alexandria, yet it would not have been possible to extirpate centuries of history with numerous arts, nor sink the discovery and peopling of new continents into a fable, or veil them and many other matters of intense interest as to the progress and origin of our race in darkness, yet impenetrable. To destroy at this time the records of any improvements and glories, as they are so universally diffused and variously preserved, we must destroy every civilized people, and all the countless printed memorials of mankind.

I would next ask, in remedying some of the defects as to intelligence in the education of the many for more practical objects and tendencies in all our efforts. This would increase their efficiency, and hasten rapidly the reformation and advancement of the masses.

Commerce, whose influence we have just been considering, possesses more of this character than books. But beside the aid of that in a practical view, it is important to give to books also, and to instruction of every kind, as well as all mental occupations a stronger direction towards what may be immediately useful in the scenes of real life. These results are to be kept more steadily in sight, rather than what is abstract or only embellishment.

This conviction does not arise from a belief that ornamental literature or abstruse researches are useless. On the contrary, refinement and polish have their value in proper places and for proper purposes; and reasoning, like Newton's or Watt's can sometimes make discoveries in science the most beneficial. But the middling and labouring classes, who constitute an immense majority of our population, can possess very little leisure beyond the application of important truths, to the more urgent wants of daily business. Let those truths then be rendered accessible to all, and in language the most pure and plain to all; but seek not to have all engrossed in fathoming difficult questions, or polishing style and manners. Scientific discoveries must be made more familiar—lyceums and institutes be multiplied and most assiduously labour for practical ends, and, indeed, nothing valuable in nature or art be known, which shall exist entirely in vain for the masses. But let the fruit be presented to them without the shell, and let all be open, direct, clear, and lucid, if possible, to the humblest intellect. Thus you give useful conclusions to those who have not time to strip off the

husk and comprehend causes, and processes, or details; and thus all kinds of knowledge will be made to minister in some degree to the practical improvement of all; and the reproaches cast on ornamental as well as abstruse studies will in no respect be deserved. Life then will seldomer be spent in Utopian dreams or the chase of mere bubbles. Nor will the learning of ages be buried in mystic symbols, or be banished from active pursuits and entombed in cloisters.

By practical objects, I do not mean the mere accumulation of food and clothing. So far from it, the cultivation of the mind and heart for moral and social enjoyment, can hardly be deemed secondary in importance to the securing of subsistence. Without it, existence becomes little beyond naked slavery. Both should be inseparable, as nature and experience show them to be most useful handmaids to each other. Physical labour to lay the foundation of subsistence, mental labor to secure it. Physical labor to increase wealth, and ensure health; mental, to guard liberty—sustain equal rights, and embellish life. Both, united, make a race of men rather than dwarfs—vigorous as well as “high-minded men;” and when accompanied by sound moral teaching—as they should be—no virtue is too gentle, nor any affection too pure, no accomplishment so high, nor any loveliness so surpassing as not to flourish in their company, and even derive new grace from their influence. Why should either of them ever be regarded as derogatory? Even royalty has at times considered labour a royal virtue.

Without stopping to enumerate in the highest ranks, many eminent examples of even manual toil, which have adorned both ancient and modern history, from Cincinnatus at his plough to Peter the Great in his work shop, it may be observed generally, that no efforts should be spared by those possessing sound intelligence, and true moral courage to make physical labor, especially among a people like ours, be regarded, as it really is, honourable no less than useful. The “Lords of the soil” are with us real sovereigns in worth as well as political power. They have been called “the true nobility of God.” They certainly, as a class, yield in morals, and in advantages bestowed to no lords of stars and garters; and the latter, every where must learn to pay to all honest toil, due homage.

Instead of a morbid aversion, dislike or neglect of it they will, if enlightened, seek to elevate rather than depress it; to make it both deserve and possess a more equal rank—to refine its tastes—to combine science more with its pursuits, and impart the true dignity of feeling which belongs to the independence and usefulness of its position. It is one of the characteristics of the present age that the working classes are becoming, as they should be, more conscious of their power, and when it is wisely exerted as this increased and better instruction will make easier and more probable, well may they be encouraged to feel proud of the benefits they confer on society as its foundation stone. Hence far seeing prudence will never fail in all possible modes to enlarge their intellectual vision, and purify their tastes. Industry in all as well as them should be rendered more attractive by additional rewards associated with it; and, in fine, all be harmonized better, by levelling more, though not through pulling down, but by raising up in intelligence, manners and moral what otherwise might be low.

Thus the whole can be benefitted, and may be enabled to escape scorn or neglect, merely for occupations, that are not in themselves disreputable, but which sprung originally from the nature and destiny of man, and on which not only the comforts, but even the existence of most of his race still depend.

I will not enter here into the details of that kind of primary education, which may best promote the principle of uniting manual and mental labour, so as to increase most the energies and usefulness of a community like ours. Many plans have

been devised to advance this object, and to impart a more practical turn to all kinds of instruction; from Pestalozzi's system down to Patridge's, and even more recent establishments. But, on this occasion, I can advert only to the general objects to be attained, and the general modes of proceeding. In connection with these it affords me pleasure to notice a resolution of the Legislature of my native State, about seven years since, which enforces strongly the views already expressed. The substance of it was that "while we view it as desirable, that a greater proportion of our youth should be nurtured in these nurseries of science (high schools, academies and seminaries of learning) we do hereby recommend to all such institutions, to adopt, as far as possible, the manual labour or self-supporting system, uniting bodily vigour and mental improvement, thereby extending to the poor as well as the rich the united advantages of physical and intellectual cultivation." Thus is it you can procure, what the ancients deemed the greatest desideratum, not only the sound and healthy mind, but a sound mind in a sound body—*mens sana in corpore sano*.

Many of our pale sons, who yearly fly in vain, for recovery to the still further sunny South, with bodies emaciated and constitutions broken, by too intense study, would then be rescued in season and invigorated by occasional labour, for further application and future usefulness.

They would not, and should not be trained as if designed to become mere boxers or gladiators; but be educated as men, for real practical life, by liberal studies, to be sure, cultivated tastes and useful scientific acquirements, yet intermingled with proper experiments, and such exercises as those at the plough or the work-bench. These would, at one and the same time, harden the constitution, recreate as well as strengthen for more vigorous study—instruct the mind in much of both nature and art, and qualify the individual to procure an honest livelihood, by manual labour, if ever becoming either necessary or agreeable. A few weeks since, I met with a mere temporary seminary among the mountains in the interior of New Hampshire, which evinced not only the increasing desire among the people at large to improve their minds, but the enterprize and vigour, as well as physical labour, with which they voluntarily seek it. Not content with what is to be procured at our free schools, located in every district in the smallest town, and unable under a cold sky and on a hard soil, to buy in all cases the higher information, so well communicated at our numerous endowed academies, something more than one hundred and twenty pupils were there collected together. They came mostly from the farm-houses within a circle of ten or twenty miles. They consisted of nearly equal proportions of the two sexes, and were more advanced in life than is usual at academies, and having procured an able instructor, who had been publicly educated, they were diligently profiting by his lectures and teaching in school hours. Out of these hours, they were working in some cases towards defraying the expenses of their board. In other cases they hired rooms at a low rate, in the neighbouring village, brought the raw materials from home for food, and prepared them, themselves, with a prudence, perseverance, shrewdness and energy that must ere long push many of them into great respectability at home, or wealth and honour at a distance. It is true, that instances of this kind do not in their exterior possess much of poetry or romance, to commend them; nor do they sound attractively to ears of mere fashion; nor tend to gratify and enchant fastidious taste, or fascinate the fancy. But they often contain great depth of feeling, below the surface; and, at times, are accompanied by all the genuine enthusiasm of genius—by chivalrous sacrifices, and efforts truly heroic. They disclose the right spirit, to be encouraged for the improvement of mankind at large. These humbler scenes are, likewise, most open to exertion and will best reward it. Their inmates, duly encouraged and animated, infuse new blood into the body politic, and help to avert the leprosy

and gangrene of sloth, effeminacy, luxury, and putrifying excesses of every kind. Their influences are to make the sleeping awake—the dead, live.

Seminaries of this character are better than gymnasiums: because they more resemble real life in miniature. They sharpen the mental faculties as well as preserve health. They combine action and thinking—practice and theory, and at the same time make persons think, reason and understand for practical use—rather than to feed the imagination or load the memory. They exhibit more students, who feel, as all ought to feel, the importance of a thorough mastery of what they learn; and this is one of the secrets, why they voluntarily make such great sacrifices and efforts to improve. Such a motive is electrifying. They labour *con amore*; are in earnest and even vehement, rather than toiling at irksome tasks, or seeking some temporary relief from the ennui of abundance and idleness. Such renovating measures are also the more to be encouraged, they accord so well with the practical condition of our state of society. Instead of long and uninterrupted hereditary rank, or great entailed riches, descending through a thousand generations, most of our men in office and affluence rise to distinction from the abodes of manual labour; and they, or their children, often descend again to the toils of agriculture or of a profession. Our peculiar form of government, opening the avenue of the highest honours to all—our peculiar laws, admitting all equally to acquire and transmit property—protecting the character and rights of all to a like extent—excluding none from professions, how ever respectable—pursuits however difficult, or citizenship however valuable—all these combine with the habits and modes of thinking, most prevalent among us, to give a more practical turn to exertion in every thing, and to require it especially in most of our public objects and public efforts. They tend, likewise, as they should, to destroy exclusive privileges as well as monopolies of all kinds. No one trade or profession is of itself entitled, above others, to wealth or distinction. There is no royal road to those here.

If a century ago, it was a just remark, in a monarchy that—"Honour and shame from no condition rise,"—how much more so is it now and here, amidst the prostration of all ranks and the thousand tendencies in our political constitutions, our legislation, social habits, and systems of education, to elevate and ennoble every one in every sphere, who may deserve it. Some of this policy came hither with our Pilgrim Fathers. But additions to it have grown up in the last two centuries of mental conflict both here and abroad—fruits of freer research, more liberal experiment and successful revolutions. They brought the moral strength and martyr zeal, with decision of character and courage, for any species of danger—and with these the iron will to persevere through hosts of difficulties. Besides being thus braced for the severest trials, they possessed enterprize unbounded, as well as a self-teaching and enlightening spirit—strong with assurance of their future prosperous fortunes. But we have had two hundred years more of experience to profit by—ten generations more of the working of free principles to develop their excellencies—new revolutions, not only in government, but in modes of thinking and acting among the masses, and a larger liberty and bolder impulses given to the rights of man every where. To be sure, under the occasional errors, mingled with these, some may at times have feared for their ultimate triumph. And when slight revulsions come, or excesses or backslidings, and even desertions in the great cause of human improvement—we may, for a moment, suffer some misgiving. But there is no ground for dismay or despondency. Society, as a whole is onward in its march. The necessities of life are much more ample. Its comforts are wider diffused. Knowledge pervades more the whole and in a higher degree. Public opinion has a loftier tone—is less craven or fawning, and is deeper and wider felt in both literature and science no less than politics. Morals, if no purer than among the Puritans, in some classes,

are better in others and all are less stern in manners, less exclusive or bigotted, and more earnestly co-operating together in the great ameliorating movements of the age.

Political power is also more completely in the grasp, and under the control, as it should be, of those for whose welfare it chiefly exists. The people at large, if less self-denying, cower less to persons in authority; are more intrepid for equal rights; rank higher individually; and in religious toleration have taken vast strides. Men are not now to be convinced by penal laws, by tests, disfranchisement, or transportation. Much less are they to be enlightened by the torch, converted by inquisitions, or satisfied of the truth by dungeons and the bayonet. Yet it must be confessed, that though this age has, by other more rational courses, become an age of great practical progress, we do not anticipate early perfection any where: but rather that this progress will—by greater care in education, be more steady, if not more rapid; and will accomplish much more, in the history of the human race in coming time, to gladden the hopes of sound philosophy, as well as far-reaching statesmanship and Christian faith. Among us, for instance, there must still continue to be youth, maturity and old age, with individuals, and even States. But both may be rendered more pure, more refined, powerful and good, as well as great. There must also continue to be misfortunes and accidents, drawbacks and disappointments—even vices and crimes—with nations, as with single citizens,—till humanity itself ceases, or is changed in its whole nature and character. But man can be schooled to stricter virtue—can be better instructed to breast and brave difficulties—can be endowed with more energy and wisdom to endure them,—and can be more encouraged, elevated and strengthened, to triumph over all the obstacles of birth or fortune.

How much oftener, then, aided by this practical policy and more enlightened condition of the masses, may the peasant boy from the mountains become the city millionaire?—how much easier, under such a system of universal education, universal freedom, and universal privileges, may even the orphan asylum of the populous mart of commerce send out, from among its forsaken inmates, one thus rescued from ignorance, and ignominy, and want—who is destined to wear the ermine of justice in the highest judicial tribunals of the land?—Or the drayman see his son command the “applause of listening Senates;” or so worthily conduct himself in various ways, as to “read his history in a nation’s eyes.” But the most humble and down-trodden in rank, even when remaining in their original occupations, undeserted, if followed with more practical intelligence and zeal, what influence and respectability will at times repay their persevering care and integrity. Why? Because it is the man, if talented, aspiring, improving—it is the immortal man, and not his birth or pursuit, which often imparts dignity to all stations; and like Epaminondas at Thebes, makes an employment before despised, an object of future and enviable ambition.—The smith at the anvil is this man, as much as the monarch on his throne. He has the senses, intellect, the rights, the passions, the sympathies, the soul, as well as the wants of other human beings. In and of himself he is second only to God or angels. The higher then, the more practically he is informed and educated, as an individual, the higher must be the power of many such, united in society or government. In a political view, then, as well as social, how vastly important it thus becomes to remedy any defect in the instruction of the masses? How wise to excite their most ardent exertions, and develope fully all their faculties; and above even this, to furnish good and ample intelligence to guide and control them?

In this way, many rash experiments in trade would have been averted, or turned to better account; many unprofitable undertakings in the arts avoided—

many reckless speculations in manufactures rendered more thrifty, if not shunned. How much of the insubordination, as well as aggressions, which have afflicted society, could also, thus have been prevented; how many ill-digested schemes in legislation, better matured; how many ruinous attempts in measures connected with political economy, stifled?

Let the Press, then, in its various ramifications—schools of all kinds—lectures—commerce—practical experiments,—let reasoning and action of every description, be concentrated to improve more the masses; and then, certainly, much can, in time, be accomplished towards remedying those defects in education, which our peculiar forms of government and condition of society tend to produce; and which, let me solemnly warn you—unless due exertion is used to the contrary—they will most assuredly perpetuate.

But when we have done all which is possible in these modes to communicate, more and better information, there is another auxiliary remedy for those defects, which is entitled to the most considerate attention. It is Discipline—it is stricter training—it is more system in action as well as thought. It is to form the custom to do what we approve—to enforce habitually in conduct, what we commend in theory. It is not merely to inform well, but to act well; and make others act well. In brief, it is practice, no less than preaching.

Knowing what is right, is, to be sure, one step, and a very important one, towards doing right. There is a beauty in truth, in justice, and virtue—in fine, a loveliness in excellence of all kinds, which, when understood and clearly seen, attracts most beholders. First comes approbation, then esteem, next admiration, and lastly, imitation. In a like manner, ignorance and wrong are often repulsive. Indeed, Vice is at times—

———“A monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen.”

Exceptions, however, occur. Delusions prevail, which knowledge alone, is occasionally weak to resist, or slow to overcome: because the error is often disguised, and the poisonous opinion gilded,—while man, at the same time, is not only proverbially frail, but surrounded with every kind of temptation. He wants, therefore, no less the firmness and habit to pursue the right, than the intelligence to distinguish it from error. Such a habit is the faithful Achates to sound principle, its strongest friend. When well formed, it furnishes almost a new faculty. Our fathers well understood this; and much more I fear than we, venerated what Cowper terms, “a sage call’d Discipline.” Then he dwelt more, not only in schools and colleges, but at the domestic fireside. There was more personal attention by superiors and the aged,—as well as more reverence, affection and obedience, by the young and the dependent. Indulgence, when permitted, was then not so irregular; but guided more by rules and principles. It was less the child of impulse, because regulated by discipline. No “palsy struck his arm,” so that “study languished, emulation slept, and virtue fled.” On the contrary, discipline was encouraged more, not only in those places, but in halls of justice—more in legislative assemblies—more in armies and navies,—and more, it is believed, in society at large. To be sure, it may be less needed where intelligence is greater and growing. But it is useful every where, and experience shows that in this country there exists more danger from increased laxity, than from any excess of austerity. Under institutions like ours, the weak side will always be too little of system or strictness.

As another illustration on this topic, it may be observed, that children left exclusively to a mother’s care, do, almost to a proverb, become more eminent. Why is this, but for a discipline—more anxious, careful, vigilant, earnest, and persevering?—for an example more pure, and more constantly before them for



imitation; besides, I admit, more affectionately giving the upon line, and precept upon precept?

But Education, as at first remarked, not being confined to infancy and youth, nor to the mind alone,—discipline should be extended to the whole life, and to the regulation of the tastes, the affections, the soul, and indeed, of the whole man. All are to be watched over and controlled. It is this more extensive training, with late as well as early, and rigid as well as constant practice, in what is taught, which, wherever introduced, proves so beneficial in aid of letters, and tends so strongly to unite “the judging head,” with “the feeling heart.” It is in youth, not the Spartan roughness and Spartan severity; but the tender caution—anxious, unslumbering solicitude,—and care-worn assiduity of parental affection,—superadded to all that is done in the school-room. It is, in adult life, the embryo Republic in daily operation in the affairs of every district, militia company, and town meeting.

These last much exceed in appropriate training, for all spheres of trial, the public assemblies of Athens, where the people listened only in thousands; and less tranquilly, from their numbers, except to accomplished orators, like Demosthenes, thundering from the *bema* against Philip:—or in Rome, still more tumultuously, except to such speakers as the Gracchi, when from the rostrum they assailed Patrician encroachments, “in thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.” Our primary meetings are generally much smaller than theirs, and the persons who take a leading part in the business, are at the same time far more numerous. This tends to promote intelligence and practice, as well as order, peace and obedience. Thus it is, that over most of our country, the assembling of jurors, county courts, and conventions of all kinds—literary and religious, as well as political, no less than of school districts, militia companies, and towns, in particular sections, are nurseries of both information and discipline. It is likewise conformity to laws and rules at the polls in elections, and higher still, in our legislative assemblies, that is calculated to assist us. In short, it is the habit, daily, of individual self-control, and public self-government. It is the knowledge and practice of ruling, no less than submitting; and thus self-respect is also increased—the dignity of our nature more highly appreciated, and the public taste elevated.

This kind of education produces, likewise, a more fixed habit of submission to the reign of the law. What can be so vital here, where we justly exult in a government of laws? Discipline obeys, even where it cannot always esteem or respect the agents and ministers of the law. Nor need impatience ever be evinced at legal restraints; for, in submission to them, there is implied neither humiliation nor reproach. True, it is obedience; but it is obedience to what should be supreme over all—to law, which formed and sustains the universe;—law, which governs angels as well as men. When we violate such obligations, and those other laws which we ourselves have helped to enact, for ourselves—insubordination evinces not only a want of discipline, but a breach of compact. It is recantation—disloyalty—dishonor—wickedness. It is not resistance to aggression, or injustice—lawless force, or usurpation and tyranny: for that kind of resistance is rightful—it becomes a duty as well as being patriotism. But the vice or defect consists in yielding to false promptings of interest—to seductive passion or fanatical feeling; and then, under their undisciplined impulses, disobeying, not what is wrong, but the lessons of experience, and the dictates of reason, no less than the requirements of our own legislation. These impulses, however, can often be controlled, if not subdued, by firmer habits always to investigate before action, and then to do what the scrutiny shows to be just and honorable. Thus we form a custom of pursuing another and a safer guide. The thoughtless and indiscriminating may stigmatize this kind of discipline as wear-

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